



Marshall Pierce Madison
Vireya of the Year

VIVA VIREYA!

HAWAII CHAPTER AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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Notes from the President's Desk:

There's not much I can add to John's notes about our meeting at Ardythe Harm's place other than, Ardythe, we appreciate your opening your home and sincerely thank you for your wonderful hospitality.

You will find the Orchid Show sign-up on page 3 of this issue. Most of the shifts have one person only signed up. It's okay to have more than one person at a time attending our booth. . . .meaning, let me know if you would like to sit, too. There's always room for more folks. A suggestion was made to give cuttings away at the Orchid Show. Great idea! If you have material to share, be sure to rinse it in soap and water before bringing them to the show. It's a good habit to get into whenever sharing your cuttings.

While in California last year, I had the privilege to meet John "Jack" Spring. He was once Peter Sullivan's boss at Strybing and a very big vireya fan. Danny Pritchard, his neighbor in San Francisco, recently wrote to tell me that Jack passed away. I've printed Danny's email on the last page of this newsletter because it is best said in "Danny's own words".

I've updated the vireya seed list. Contact me for a copy.

Our next meeting will be at the Panaewa Zoo on August 20th. We will have a work party starting at 10am.

Till next time, Happy Gardening & Viva Vireya
Sherla D. Bertelmann

Mitch's Corner

By Mitch Mitchell

Among the trusses I took to our last chapter meeting for the truss give away was one of *R. leucogigas* "Hunsteins Secret" which is being held in the photo by member Bruce Winter. The photographer probably should have focused more on the flower, but he was also interested in featuring Bruce who for a long time has been assisting me every month in preparing the trusses to take to our meetings. You might not remember Bruce. Because he is also an avid member of the local Bonsai Club and their meetings coincide with ours.

This first bloom (for me) of "Hunstein's Secret" was quite exciting (the photo doesn't do it justice), and I was taken back to the arrival of its seed from Sylvia Saperstein from Australia. Our members at the time will remember at the chapter meeting held in our garden I used it to put on a demonstration of how to sow seed. As sort of a "door prize" I presented a number of the members with tubs holding the medium with sown seeds. My hope was that when those seeds germinated the members would be so entranced that they would be caught up in the fun of growing vireyas from seed. I tried to add to their anticipation with the reminder that in our rather remote location in Hawaii it was much easier to acquire seed than cuttings or rooted plants.

This truss is one of those seeds that germinated. I haven't heard from any of the other members as to what happened to their sown seeds, and I might admit that this has been disappointing. Well, it also got me thinking that perhaps it was time to remind them that they are missing an exciting

gardening experience by not growing vireyas from seed. We all remember with affection the significant part that Bill Moyles played in helping us get our Public Vireya garden started at the Panaewa Zoo. Bill worked for many years to maintain the ARS Vireya Seed Exchange and a grateful national membership presented him with its prestigious Gold Medal a short time ago.

When he decided that the time had come for him to retire from that position our chapter offered to take it over. This has been diligently administered by our president Sherla Bertelmann, and she has collected much seed from all over the world that is available to all for a very nominal fee. The regularly printed Seed List is available on line at her email address, and you should be taking advantage of this marvelous service. And don't forget to tell her when you see her that you

recognize and appreciate the big effort she makes for the benefit of Vireya growers around the world.



(Photo of Bruce & "Hunstein's Secret" by Mitch Mitchell)

JOHN'S NOTES

By John Barbour

Richard's back (and we all thought it was his shoulder!) from California where he underwent surgery on his left shoulder. The operation was a success but will require many months of recovery time. I think I can speak for all of us, Richard. If you need any help in shouldering the burden, let us know. Get well quickly! This, too, will pass. Viva Vireya!

It's a dangerous world out there. For instance, at the very meeting Richard missed, club members found themselves in harm's way – Zone 1- in an oasis of chertreuse palms surrounded by the charred Kapoho lava fields broiling in July's summer sun. Nestled amongst waving fronds, Ardythe Harm's expansive residence offered us a cool respite thanks to the heroic efforts of Ron Phillips who erected a large tarp to shade attendees. Why we didn't just assemble in one of Ardythe's bedrooms or bathrooms is subject to some conjecture. Impropriety perhaps, but I understand that one room was reserved for a tennis match later in the afternoon ... and guests were observed dancing in the master bath! (Thank you, Ardythe!!!)

We spent so much time exploring Ardythe's abode that we were scarcely through the noonday when Sherla called the meeting to order. Business discussed included: sign-up for sitting at the up & coming orchid show and plans for our vireya promotional at the zoo in October. Sherla also announced that the "Friends of the Zoo" (FOZ) decided to reprint their t-shirts (the ones with the vireya leis around the neck) in support of our Oct. event. Appreciative, not only of this

but also of all the kokua, aloha and support extended to our club by FOZ, our membership agreed to donate \$250 to them in support of its many on-going programs. Viva Vireya!

Viva Vireya, too, to all those who indicated a willingness to explore and develop new approaches to membership, education, publicity and programs with a view to expanding individual member participation. If you missed the sign-up, not to worry! We have lots of room and aloha for additional volunteers.

Business over, our guest speaker, Barbara Fahs, stepped up to the microphone to discuss growing herbs and medicinal plants in Hawaii. She wrote a book entitled "Super Simple Guide to Creating Hawaiian Gardens" and owns "Hi'iaka's Healing Herb Garden" in Hawaiian Paradise Park. With lively audience participation, Barbara fielded any number of questions about herbs and poisonous plants here locally.

Our trusses are usually given away at the end of our meetings. But, this time there was a very special truss brought in by Mitch that was auctioned off instead. It was huge truss of R. leucogigas "Hunstein's Secret" and, after heated bidding between Very Ann Grace and Chuck Martin; it was purchased for \$16 by Chuck. (Thank you, Mitch & Chuck).

As the meeting drew to a close, members packed up their chairs, balanced foil-covered dishes of potluck leftovers and reluctantly headed to their cars. It had been a beautiful day...as beautiful as all the colorful trusses given away at the meeting. Viva Vireya!

Meet Charles (Chuck) Martin

By John Barbour

Time did not permit me to interview Chuck after the July meeting so I telephoned him later to learn more about the mild-mannered gentleman behind the gold framed glasses who serves on our Board of Directors and who faithfully, quietly, attends all our meetings. Well, hang onto your garden hats – this guy rocks!

Chuck served 3 years as a pilot in WWII and holds degrees from USC and UCLA. Following graduation Chuck practiced optometry for a number of years in California. This farm boy from Iowa, who remembers going to school on horseback, braving the winds on a ranch in Nebraska and riding hay sleds in the winter, has come a long way. How he ended up as a docent at the Lyon Arboretum on Oahu is another story.

Unfortunately space does not permit me to describe all the blossoms on Chuck's "Lei of Life" but it was while at Lyon Arboretum that Chuck was first introduced to

vireyas. "They were a novelty at the time," Chuck relates. "I lived at the top of Kalama Valley then and couldn't grow vireya there due to the daily 40+ MPH winds that swept up the valley." Eventually Chuck decided to catch the next trade wind to the Big Island where he settled in Puna surrounding himself with – of course – vireyas. Chuck's favorite vireya? "I'm fickle," Chuck confesses. "I have a different favorite every day, but I am partial to "St. Cecilia" and "Harry Wu".



Orchid Show Sign-up

Wednesday - August 9th	Friday – August 11th	Saturday-August 12 th	Sunday-August 13th
<i>Set-up 10 am</i>	<i>9 am to 9 pm</i>	<i>9 am to 5 pm</i>	<i>9 am to 3 pm</i>
Sudha Achar	<i>9 – 11am</i>	<i>9-11 am</i>	<i>9-11 am</i>
Ron & Donna	Peter & Jane Adams	John & Christa	Open
Sherla	<i>11-1 pm</i>	<i>11-1 pm</i>	<i>11-1 pm</i>
	Chuck Martin	Bettye Wakabayashi	Joan Denn
	Henry Horton	<i>1-3 pm</i>	<i>1-3 pm</i>
	<i>1-3 pm</i>	Open	Dale Dinsmore
	Dale Dinsmore	<i>3-5 pm</i>	Veryl Ann Grace
	<i>3-5 pm</i>	John & Christa	
	Enny van Delden		Tear Down
	<i>5-7 pm</i>		Dale Dinsmore
	Open		Veryl Ann Grace
	<i>7-9 pm</i>		Ron & Donna
	Cindy & Ray Schimpf		

Hana Hou (One More Time)

By Sherla Bertelmann

Photos are wonderful for their ability to bring up happy memories and emotions. Recently I came upon three I would like to share with you that did just that to me.

The first is of Stan Dinsmore, who recently passed away, with his ukulele. Our off-island friends will remember Stan and his friends as the group who entertained us at the Wailoa Pavillion the night of our Fellowship Dinner at the end of the 2004 Western Regional Convention. My mind fills with the scents, sounds and good feelings of Stan, our chapter, the convention and our many new friends.

The second is one taken just a few months ago. Mitch Mitchell had just announced a vireya to be named after Enny van Delden. This was in April before both their birthdays. Since then Mitch turned 89 in June and, at our last meeting in July, Enny officially turned 90 years old. This photo not only brings Mitch and Enny to mind but also Rex, Enny's late husband. Rex was a gentleman, orchid lover, grower, judge and most knowledgeable about all kinds of plants. He would say, "As long as you like the flower then it doesn't matter what the name of the variety is." A 'noname' is just as good as a named one.



The third and last one was taken by Spike Werner of Lily Leyva, our official photographer on our Carlsmith Estate outing. Here she is at 7 years old looking at the world through a camera. I look at this one and I marvel at the potential, wonder and curiosity that children have to see the things right in front of us that we sometimes miss.

I now have a Detailed Itinerary of our Tour to Tasmania this Fall. I know most of you are not meeting, but if you know of anyone who would be interested in a Great Trip to Melbourne Australia and Tasmania in October, we are looking for a few more people to fill out our tour. If you could let anyone you think might be interested have this info, I would appreciate it. I need to finalize who is going by August 15th so we can confirm all of our reservations. Thank You!!

William R. Heller -World Rhododendron Tours & Vice President Seattle Rhododendron Society

(Please contact me for the detailed itinerary & registration form or for Wm. Heller's contact info ... Sherla)

(Taken from Chris Callard's Archive at www.vireya.net. David Leach, in a talk given in 1977, takes you back to the very beginning of Vireya rhododendrons' discovery and its introduction into cultivation. It will be run as a serial over the next few newsletters. Enjoy! SB)

The Discovery of the Malaysian Rhododendrons by David G. Leach

Royal Horticultural Society
Rhododendrons with Magnolias and Camellias 1977

We tend to take our planet for granted. Complacently, we assume that the unknown parts of it were explored long ago, that the adventure and excitement and romance of penetrating faraway lands vanished with the hobble skirt and turkey trot. But one of the strangest stories in the annals of plant exploration was unfolded 16 years ago with the abrupt publication by Dr. Herman Sleumer, a Dutch botanist, of descriptions of 96 new species of rhododendrons. When all the discoveries of the previous three decades were brought together in orderly array, taxonomists were disconcerted to learn that the size of the genus was increased by half in one stroke, to about 900 species. Hobbyists were startled to hear that the newcomers were ever-blooming and that they came in "high octane" scarlets and yellows as well as in psychedelic combinations of orange and pink. The flowers of some were mammoth, with trumpets an incredible eight inches across. Oddest of all,

more were epiphytic, growing high on forest tree limbs with mosses and orchids, rather than rooting solidly in the ground. With the great wonder at such marvels came much speculation about their origins. How was it possible in mid-century for any wilderness on earth to yield so many new rhododendrons never before seen by man? The story goes back to 1823 when Dr. William Jack "of the late East India Company's service" discovered in Sumatra a rhododendron with small cerise-crimson flowers and bizarre appearance, later called *R. malayanum*. (At the time, the only known Asiatic rhododendron was the blood-red flowered tree from India, *R. arboreum*, forerunner of multitudes of popular garden hybrids.) Jack's discovery was followed before 1845 by *R. jasminiflorum*, with exotic white flowers stained deep pink in the centre, sent from Malacca to James Veitch & Sons Nursery at Exeter by their collector, Thomas Lobb. (Soon

thereafter came the even more flamboyant *R. javanicum* from Java, with electrifying orange flowers spotted red, and purple anthers.) *R. jasminiflorum* bloomed for the first time in 1849 and was proudly exhibited by Lobb's employer at the Royal Horticultural Society's first show of the year 1850. It was so unlike any rhododendron known, a reporter implied it was not a rhododendron at all. It was the next year, 1851, when Hugh Low, a government official at Labuan Island, made a remarkable climb to 13,500 feet on a mountain in nearby Borneo in the course of which he discovered a rhododendron which he called *R. brookeanum*. It was named for his dear friend, the celebrated Rajah of Sarawak, Sir James Brooke. The flowers, beautiful orange-pink with an ivory centre, were a sensational find. Low's journey to climb Mount Kina Balu was a dramatic one. As he rounded

a bend in his little boat on the Tauran River, he was suddenly confronted with a fleet of war canoes in full regalia, led by a notorious pirate with the comic-opera title, Sultan of Layer-Layer, who later in the year was to behead the British adventurer, Robert Burns. But the encounter was one of welcome; Low's reputation for love of the country and affection for its natives had preceded him.

After the final agonizing climb to the summit of the mountain, numbed with cold in the rarefied air, he made a gesture of the sort which built the Empire.

Encountering a cliff near the top, with an awesome drop to the valley below, he lay down to peer over the edge and there toasted Her Majesty with a bottle of Madeira. He placed the empty bottle in a gully, where it was found seven years later by a friend on a second ascent.

Low's coppery yellow *Rhododendron brookeanum* bloomed in England in 1855, a novelty of such interest that "attracted great attention" when it was exhibited at a Royal Horticultural Society show. "R. lobbii" (now *R. longiflorum*), bright glossy crimson, came in from Borneo in 1870. Fifteen years later "R. teysmannii" (now *R. javanicum* var. *teysmannii*), from Sumatra and Penang, was given an award by the Society for its

deep golden-yellow flowers when it was first shown. R. multicolor aptly described the variety of hues to be found in the flowers of the species which arrived shortly afterwards in England. The Society awarded it a First Class Certificate in 1883. A frenzy of hybridizing was in progress with the tropical rhododendrons of the Malay Archipelago in the greenhouses of the Veitch firm which had sponsored the equatorial explorations. From the seven species sent back to England by their collectors in the preceding 30 years several hundred new hybrids were produced for the glasshouses of the gentry. The first and most famous was 'Princess Royal', a glowing pink which astounded its breeder because it came from a white crossed with a yellow species. He was even more bemused when the white *R. jasminiflorum*, crossed with the strong pink 'Princess Royal', produced the snowy white 'Princess Alexandra'. Privileged amateurs were also attempting crosses among the newcomers. J. H. Mangles, well known as a plantsman and for the prolixity of his contributions to gardening publications, in describing an exasperating failure, repeated the admonition of a friend : there are "certain atmospheric moments for the union of vegetable species", he wrote. "Never try such things when an east wind is blowing."

The advice surely ranks as history's most singular explanation for the failure of crosses to produce seeds. By 1893 Veitch's catalogue listed scores of hybrid cultivars : four years later the year-round flowering of the Veitch hybrids was demonstrated by exhibiting a tray of cut blooms at every fortnightly meeting of the Royal Horticultural Society throughout 1897.

But it all came to a sudden end. For at the height of the popularity of the Malaysians, there sprang into the horticultural world a second burst of hybridizing that rivalled and quickly overwhelmed the Malaysian fancy. Hundreds of new species of rhododendrons were suddenly pouring in from that vast continent to the north, mainland Asia. Reports of rhododendrons found by French Catholic missionaries on the mountain slopes of western China and the Himalaya were circulating in Britain, so Veitch sent out E. H. "Chinese" Wilson to investigate further. After all, these mainland rhododendrons could be expected to survive outdoors; the Malaysians were then believed to require hot-house conditions. Within two years Wilson sent back to his delighted employers 40 new, hardy, mainland species.

(to be continued next month)

Viva Vireya!

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“In His Words: Danny Pritchard on Jack Spring”

Sherla, The above article (*referring to a SF newspaper article on Jack*) was in our paper here today. What it does not say that may of be of interest to you is that while he was the head nurseryman and propagator for Golden Gate Park, it was he that received the first vireya in the United States. I do not remember the species or variety, but he, along with Peter Sullivan, hybridized many of the hybrids we have today. His number one favorite was R. leucogigas. He was a very quiet man, did not take credit for a lot that he did, and would allow others to take credit for his work. The man in the article, John McLaren, was the architect of Garden Gate Park here in San Francisco and who Jack learned his trade from. He will be greatly missed by all of us. When Jack moved next door to me, I did not know about vireyas, but then all of a sudden this bright orange rhododendron-like plant came into bloom. I asked him what was that rhododendron-like plant blooming in the corner of the yard? It turned out to be Vireya 'Mt. Pire'. He taught me how to start them from cuttings and, later on, how to cross pollinate two varieties. The rest is history. I was hooked. Thank you Jack and may he rest in peace.

(My sentiments, too... Aloha, Jack. SB)

(Contact me if you want the link to the article referred to. SB)

Next Meeting:

Date: August 20, 2006 (Sunday)

Time: 10 am – Zoo work party

12 pm – lunch (brown bag)

1 pm – short meeting

Place: Panaewa Rainforest Zoo & Botanical Garden

Bring your own brown bag lunch. The Chapter will provide drinks. Any questions please call Sherla at 966-9225.